

Lehi Tabernacle Cornerstone

By Richard Van Wagoner

During a youth conference held this past August, the original Lehi Tabernacle Cornerstone, was returned to the site where it had been from 1901 until 1962. The stone has a fascinating story which I intend to tell today.

On an earlier feature I related that the Tabernacle was my favorite historic building. It towering domes and lofty spires were an inspiration to all. The craftsmanship of our local artisans was symbolic of the grandness of our Mormon pioneer heritage. What a shame that this house of worship was demolished in the name of modernization. Consider the splendor of the Alpine Stake Tabernacle in American Fork and the Utah Stake Tabernacle in Provo. They are superb testimonies to historical preservation and restoration.

There is a lesson here. The Tabernacle was unique, no other community anywhere has one like it. That is why I am such an ardent supporter of restoring our Memorial Building-another one-of-a-kind structure. When the project is finished and the Hutchings Museum has been established therein, it will be one of our community's most valuable assets-a monument to the foresight of Mayor Guy Cash's administration.

To gain an appreciation of the Tabernacle cornerstone let me tell you about its creators. Englishman Arthur Bradder (born in 1855) at the age of thirteen began a two-year stone-cutting apprenticeship which he left because of an abusive master. He then traveled about England, Wales, and France plying the skills he had learned. In 1874, he became converted to Mormonism through the efforts of Mary Jane Chappel, whom he married shortly afterwards in Cardiff, South Wales.

Working in Liverpool England, during 1878, Bradder was able to save enough money to transport his family to America. They arrived in Salt Lake City on October 6, 1877 but he could not find work. The family moved first to Sanpete

County, then to Providence, Cache County, but work was hard to come by. Finally in the spring of 1878, he found a job which lasted for three years.

The Ogden Fourth ward then sent him to Wasatch (the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon) to cut granite for the Salt Lake Temple. In 1884, on the advice of Wasatch Stake President Abram Hatch, Bradder moved to Heber, where he found ample work for four more years.

In the spring of 1888, Bradder obtained a contract for cutting stone for the new Ogden City Hall. His business in Utah's second largest city continued to prosper and he eventually employed twelve other cutters. One of these men, Joseph J. Gill (born in England in 1869), married Bradder's daughter Henrietta. The two men formed a partnership and in 1897, after being told there would be no stone cutting competition in Lehi, moved to town and established the Lehi Stone, Marble and Granite Works (later Arthur Bradder and Company) on the northeast corner of Fourth North and First East.

The first major contract Bradder and Gill obtained was for the decorative stone on the downtown People's Co-op building (189 West Main). Presumably they also did the stone work on the New Log Cabin Saloon (155 West Main), the Merrihew Building (98 West Main), the Ross Block (86 West Main), and the main Building of the uptown Peoples Co-op (151 East State)--all built between 1902 and 1908.

Another example of the fine stone-cutting abilities of Bradder and Gill is the Lehi Pioneer Monument, which not stands on the Memorial Building grounds. Erected in 1908 at the cost of \$850, the monument consists of two sections. The four-by-four-foot base is Utah Granite while the ten-foot-high shaft is Barry Granite from Vernal. Although the Elias Morris and Company of Salt Lake City designed the historic structure, the stone-cutting contract was given to Arthur Bradder.

Despite the welcome commercial work, the majority of Arthur Bradder and Co.'s work was marble and granite cemetery monuments. The signature A.

Bradder can be read near the bottom of dozens of white marble headstones in the Lehi Cemetery. And much of the company's best work--such as the Jacob Cox, Lizzie Gardner Cox, and Daniel and Lucy Cox arched two pillar markers are unsigned. They also did the work on the George Comer monument, the tallest stone in the cemetery.

The largest local project for Bradder and Gill was the Lehi Tabernacle. Because some stones used in that building were huge, weighing several tons, the stonecutters relocated their business to the yard of the uptown railroad depot in August 1901. Huge gang saws were set up in the shop and the cutting began.

The cost of the sixty-dollar cornerstone was met by the "nickel fund" contributions of twelve hundred Sunday School children and their teachers. LDS Church President Lorenzo Snow was invited to lay the cornerstone when it was completed, but because of illness was unable to come to Lehi. He was represented by his son, Leroi Snow.

The program that long ago, September 14, 1901 began with serenading by the Lehi Silver Band from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. Promptly at 2:00, the band performed an opening number. The congregation then sang, "All Hail the Glorious Day.". Invocation was then offered by Patriarch James Moyle. The Lehi Sunday School Choir then sang the popular Mormon hymn, "The Spirit of God like a Fire is Burning".

The cornerstone was then lifted into place by a huge boom and local photographer William Asher took the shots you see today. Former Lehi Ward Bishop Thomas Cutler then ceremoniously wielded a silver towel which had been hand-crafted by Lehi silver-smith Abraham Gudmundsen.

Before the cornerstone was sealed in a metal box filled with numerous photographs, books, newspapers, and other artifacts, was placed in a hollowed-out cavity of the stone. A selection by the Gaddie Orchestra then followed after which LeRoi Snow addressed the congregation.

The Lehi Tabernacle Choir then sang an anthem entitled “Gratitude.” The song was followed by addresses from the Alpine State President Stephen L. Chipman, James L Clark, and Abel John Evans. (Lehi Stake was not created until 1928). A selection by the Smuin Quadrille Band was followed by an speech from Bishop Thomas R. Cutler. The concluding song by the congregation was “High on a Mountain Top”. Andrew R. Anderson gave the benediction.

Sixty one years the tabernacle was beaten by a massive wrecker’s ball and unceremoniously hauled away to various dumping sites. The cornerstone was salvaged by the Robert White family. They donated it to Lehi Stake earlier this year for inclusion in a monument presently under development on the south end of the Lehi Stake Center property.

Before cementing the cornerstone into its new position on August 2, 1991, materials were placed into a time capsule beneath the monument. This will be opened in 25 years (2018).

What happened to the time capsule in the original cornerstone ? Well it was stored in the vault at the State Bank of Lehi until the spring of 1983. The Lehi Stake Presidency in the presence of a host of church and civic officials opened it. The items in the repository were first placed on display in the trophy case of the Lehi Jr. High School. Eventually they were donated to the Hutchings Museum.

Fortunately, the cornerstone was not the only item salvaged from the Tabernacle. A large “Holiness to the Lord Stone” also still exists. The January 30, 1902 “Lehi Banner” noted that the cut stone work over the main entrance to the new tabernacle is a fine piece of work and reflects credit on our local stone cutter, Mr. A. Bradder.

This huge stone along with the sandstone (also cut by Bradder and Gill) was hauled west of Lehi and dumped in a ravine near the Jordan River when the Tabernacle was demolished in 1962. I was jogging in that area several years ago and

noticed the head of dressed stone. On closer examination, I made out the inscription, “Holiness To The Lord,” and recognized that this was the stone that once graced the Tabernacle’s main entrance. With the help of Lehi city crew, the artifact was recovered for the Hutchings Museum.

When the displays for the new Hutchings Museum are established in the Memorial Building, it is anticipated that a Lehi Tabernacle exhibit will be included. This will likely include the Holiness to the Lord Stone, the cornerstone contents, and the Abraham Gudmundsen-crafted silver silver trowel and a dozen or so photos of the building.

UPDATE

The Cornerstone of the Tabernacle is now displayed at the Lehi City Historical Archives along with photographs of the Tabernacle.

The Museum have the Holiness to the Lord stones in their possession, but are not presently on display.

The Lehi Stake Contents of the cornerstone to be opened in 2018 were destroyed by water getting into the contents.